

# POMEGRANADE

By Ran Xia

Developed as part of IRT's 3B Developmental Series

SETTING:

The Underworld

The Train Running Towards the Underworld

The Present

## DRAMATIC PERSONAE

4:48: a soldier who remembers

ARES: exuberant, spoiled, charismatic; think every Sam Rockwell roles cross over with Russell Brand

DIONYSUS (Female): Simultaneously Amy Schumer and Amy Winehouse

GENYMEDE (Played by one of the chorus, an invisible bystander)

HADES: a hermit with a suppressed temper. OCD. He'd rather be a librarian than a king. Possessive. (might or might not be modeled after the Doctor)

HERMES: A cross over between Ariel and John Oliver. Think of a punk rock war correspondent

KHARON: a woman with a past; sarcastic, practical, larger than life

PERSEPHONE: naïve, fiery, a young woman discovering herself. She would've been sorted into Gryffindor. Natasha from Great Comet and Belle from B&B

A CHORUS of FOUR:

MOTHERS who lost their children

DOCTORS who tried to help

RESISTERS (J, Nan, Leila, and M)

**"/" indicates the beginning of next speech**

**"..." indicates a pause**

**Consider the music inspirations during the writing process**

*"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. "*

— George Santayana

### **ACT I - SCENE 1: Frogs and Secrets**

*KHARON has a story to tell. She picks a record to play with great efforts. A person of no apparent importance, 4:48, has her attention, and listens.*

KHARON

The purpose of gods is so that memories of the worlds are kept alive  
 Gods make the rules  
 They break the rules  
 Gods can be cruel  
 They can get lonely  
 They can fall in love  
 They can

...

Someone unexpected usually comes along. Just, someone's daughter -- Comes along  
 and saves the day. The entire creation gets a reboot  
 So they're alive again, as long as there are stories to tell.

*Text message ringtone*

Are you ready for the next broadcast?

*4:48 [motions] picking up an image.  
 The record reaches its end, like when a story begins.*

HADES

I should tell her.

*KHARON doesn't respond. Beat. She decides to respond.*

KHARON

Ok

HADES

You think -- should I tell her?

*KHARON doesn't respond. Exits.*

PERSEPHONE

You can't touch your nose with your tongue

*Lights up. PERSEPHONE and HADES, a peaceful moment*

HADES

Huh?

PERSEPHONE

You can't touch --

HADES

Why would you want to do that?

PERSEPHONE

I don't know. Would've liked the option. Can you?

HADES

Touch my nose -- ?

PERSEPHONE

Yeah. Can you touch your nose with your tongue?

HADES

Sure

PERSEPHONE

No you can't -- Show me

HADES

I'm not gonna do that

PERSEPHONE

Because you can't

HADES

Because it's silly and I'm not gonna do that

PERSEPHONE

Oh -- But

...

Look. *(She tries to touch her nose with her tongue)* Am I doing it? Am I doing it? Did I touch -- *(Frustrated in defeat)* Can you really do it?

HADES

No of course not. What do you think I am, a frog?

PERSEPHONE

Frogs don't have noses stupid -- Frogs also can't do this

*She goes and kisses him. She discovers something awkward and new.*

HADES

Right

PERSEPHONE

Right

HADES

Right

PERSEPHONE

Right

HADES

We can say something else too you know, as long as it's not noses, or frogs

PERSEPHONE

No more noses, or frogs

*She kisses him again, in a way like studying a mathematics problem*

Hmm

HADES

What

PERSEPHONE

Odd.

HADES

Odd?

PERSEPHONE

It's odd. And wrong. There's -- must be something wrong with me because  
How can it be -- you've been the face of every thought in my head; every abstract  
pronoun makes me think of only you. Whenever I read a book -- any book, it's your  
voice I hear, saying the words.

I was counting how many steps I need to take -- walking over. 1, your mouth, 3,  
your nose, 5, 6, your hand, 2, 3, your mouth again, 5, 6, some furry little animal puts  
a hook on top my stomach and -- lifts -- and it's just hovering over here, like when  
the plane is landing and your body's already reached earth but everything inside's  
still up there with the clouds -- just looking at you makes me feel all tingly. That's  
odd isn't it?

*(Silence. She thinks of how to continue)...*

Do you know why I love -- being here?

HADES

Yeah?

PERSEPHONE

Because being with you is like touching my nose with my tongue

HADES

I thought we're done talking about noses

PERSEPHONE

Like it's totally crazy and dangerous and impossible and -- Yeah. Impossible.  
And forbidden. Like there's something wrong with me. Must be.

HADES

It's because this (*He kisses her on the nose*)  
*This is a secret (He means their affair)*

*She kisses him on the mouth till she's out of breath.*

PERSEPHONE

*This is a proper secret* -- It feels like being close to death but at the same time alive,  
so much more alive than I've ever been.

HADES

Like waking up from a deep sleep,  
Like I've been asleep for a million years and finally -- People write fairytales about  
those things because it's true

PERSEPHONE

Except people share fairytale stories with --

HADES

I told you --

PERSEPHONE

Everything is a secret with you

HADES

You like secrets

PERSEPHONE

Not that kind I don't

HADES

Don't you trust me

PERSEPHONE

I do... I probably shouldn't. No -- I don't even know your name.

HADES

*(Whispers)* Secrets are hot

PERSEPHONE

Secrets are hot -- Another secret then

*(Another kiss, she's now at ease)* Did you like my secret?

HADES

Yeah

PERSEPHONE

Yeah?

...

Why wouldn't you tell me who you are? If it's all the same

You were gonna tell me

...

You were never gonna tell me

HADES

I... *(He gets a message on the phone, looks at it)*

Have to go.

PERSEPHONE

Wait

*Lights gradually dim to blackout*

KHARON

This is my attempt to tell you a love story

This can still be a love story

The problem with gods is that they live

If nothing goes terribly wrong. A very long time

They live, and live, and live, until they don't feel alive anymore

Life is cheap, for some of them

For some of them it's a currency

For some of them it's all they have

Well I am, still trying to make it a love story

But it's nearly impossible to love anybody for that long

## SCENE 2: A Trip

*We hear voices of a WOMAN. It's a memory. Like music from headphones. HERMES is dressed like Lady Gaga being a reporter. Smell of something burning; gunpowder. KHARON and HADES are visible.*

HERMES (to KHARON)

Testing, 1, 2, 3, ready? (etc.)

*Music starts*

HERMES

*(Sings - A Minor, tempo 6/8, like a slow dance)*

Love is an open wound

Love is a hunger

*Music continues but he stop*

FIRST MOTHER (JARA)

I wonder when the next bomb's going to fall.

My little girl says mommy, let's go on a picnic, can we go on a picnic

HERMES

Love is a fire moon

Love is a river

*Music continues but he stops*

FIRST MOTHER

I say we're in a desert honey. We can't go on a picnic in a desert

HERMES

I walked ten thousand miles ten thousand miles

Looking for the same light the same water

Away from home *(music continues but he stops)*

FIRST MOTHER

I wonder when the next bomb's going to fall.

HERMES

Love is a winter bloom

Love is a stranger

*A bomb. Music turns into a rhythmic humming. KHARON gestures the MAN to step forward.*

HERMES

Recording for the archive. Subject is female.

FIRST MOTHER

A bomb hit our house.  
My little girl was alone in her bedroom.

HERMES

Subject is a mother.

FIRST MOTHER

An ambulance took them across the border -- my sister, and --  
The closest clinic --  
I don't remember much. I can't think --  
For four months -- we stayed -- They helped -- as much as they could.  
We have no money. We had to run.  
We had to run. We kept hearing people say that we should go to  
Germany, or Greece. Everyone else was going. We go north. We move around,  
sometimes we sleep in a tent, or in a garden, anywhere. My daughter played  
wherever we stopped.  
It's very difficult to sleep at night. She was terrified of all kinds of noises. My  
daughter. She was only --  
Even just a car engine.  
We had to run.  
We arrived in an inflatable boat --  
All 50, 60 of us packed in. I was holding her tiny hand.  
I was holding her hand a second ago. Now I can't find her.  
Water, water, water all around us.  
Salty water. Water muddled with dirt from our hands, our legs; water muddled with  
feces; water muddled with blood.  
Sand storms always came after the bombs.  
Sand storms with red winds. We hear people say that it's not sand, it's ashes of  
people, / and houses, everything shattered.

HERMES

Means of arrival: beneath the water

*Music stops*

KHARON

Sand storm's starting again. It's getting more frequent these days.  
Children are not supposed to see these things.

*The oar of a boat cutting through water.  
Another memory. Same music from before.*



SECOND MOTHER (JENNA)

We'll hide away. We'll leave. Tonight.

HERMES

Recording for the archive. Subject is Female

HERMES as a CHILD (a V.O with lip sync)

The little girl says mommy will we come back soon?

SECOND MOTHER

Maybe, in the spring.

*Silence*

HERMES

Subject is a mother.

HERMES as a CHILD (overlapped with a V.O of a child)

The little girl says I miss home.

SECOND MOTHER

We haven't even left yet.

HERMES as a CHILD (overlapped with a V.O of a child)

The little girl says Where are we going?

SECOND MOTHER

We're going across the ocean. We're going to be on an island. Do you remember what an island is?

HERMES as a CHILD (overlapped with a V.O of a child)

The little girl says but mommy I don't like it there.

SECOND MOTHER

You've never been there, silly goose. Hush now. We have a long way to go.

*They fold and sleep on the ground.*

*The WOMAN tucks the imaginary CHILD in.*

HERMES

Means of arrival: the inside of a hollow tree

The little girl says I'm hungry mommy.

An island is, a land, surrounded by water

*WOMAN sings a lullaby*

**SCENE 3: The Abduction**

*Persephone in vibrant color  
There's one lone tree in sight.  
It's a very old tree with twisted branches.  
Hades wears a hoodie. Whenever he has the hood on, he's invisible.  
Silence.  
She's looking for something. She looks disappointed.  
She sits down on the ground.  
A while. Hades finally takes off the hat.*

PERSEPHONE

How long have you been here?  
I got your message. I knew it's you.  
I can kind of. Tell. You were.  
There! And then maybe -- There

HADES

I was kind of nice just to watch you for a while.  
I like to --  
Was that creepy? Sorry if that was creepy.

*They have a moment*

PERSEPHONE

I thought you weren't gonna come back  
It's been

HADES

A while

PERSEPHONE

Yeah.  
A while.

HADES

I've missed you

PERSEPHONE

I've missed you.

*His phone beeps. He checks it.  
It's not good news.  
For the remainder of the scene his phone keeps buzzing and he keeps checking  
it, sometimes responding quickly.*

PERSEPHONE

You look tired. Distracted (*Possibly a projection, she's distracted herself*)

...

I was worried

There's been --

Soldiers. They're everywhere. Tanks on the streets, bombers in the sky

Everywhere I go -- kids are crying. People are going crazy.

Can't tell if they're laughing, or crying

I don't understand their languages.

People. They've gone crazy. That's what my mother says. I've been thinking --

There's something I gotta tell you.

You look

Distracted

(*She waits for him to respond a message*)

HADES

Sorry. This --

PERSEPHONE

Is it work? What are -- no stop, don't say anything, I'm not gonna ask -- I get it.

...

I don't care about that. Not anymore. You don't have to tell me anything.

I gotta tell you something though.

It's --

It's been a really strange time lately. I've been thinking.

I mean. All that's been happening

And, us -- I mean it feels unimportant, this, us

I mean --

*A few text message ring tones, HADES decides to not look at it*

PERSEPHONE

You're the only good thing I have left

HADES

You're the only good thing I have left

*Another message.*

*He checks it. It's something serious.*

PERSEPHONE

You need to go?

HADES

This can wait

PERSEPHONE

I wish things were different --  
 I wish news stories were boring.  
 Everything's just --  
 Doesn't even feel real. Nothing feels real.  
 I mean are you even really here?  
 Sometimes I feel like maybe -- maybe this is all just a dream  
 Maybe I made you up

HADES

Touch

PERSEPHONE

I know.  
 ...  
 I'm angry

HADES

Angry?

PERSEPHONE

Doesn't all this make you angry? It's like the whole world's gone mad.  
 I wish I were stronger --  
 Then I'll be able to protect all those people --  
 I'm useless

HADES

That's not true

PERSEPHONE

Yes it is. Yes it is.  
 What have I ever done? Completely useless

HADES

You make flowers grow

PERSEPHONE

Gardening. Big deal.  
 ...  
 Everything seems so insignificant, and  
 Fragile,  
 Especially when it feels like violence is drawing closer everyday.

HADES

We'll be ok. I'll make sure you're ok

## PERSEPHONE

I don't need protection. I need to go pick up a rifle, a knife, a hand grenade, and fight  
 — With the others. They've taught me -- I've found sisters, not by blood but --  
 I haven't even told my mother. She wouldn't understand --  
 We just wanna do something, anything -- I've been practicing.  
 Look *(she takes out a knife in her bag, a dagger)*.

...

Say something  
 The whole world's gone mad --

## HADES

This is not your fight

## PERSEPHONE

What am I supposed to do then? Gardening? Send prayers? Prayers are useless.  
 There's just one little world -- our world --  
 There's nowhere else to go there's just -- one -- of course it's my business. It's your  
 business too. I skinned my knee when I was little -- my whole body felt the pain. I  
 cried for hours. If your finger is cut off -- even just a little bit, you're no longer  
 complete. You can't wait till they come for the rest -- whatever happens in one place  
 is -- war is like cancer. It's going to spread.

*Hades hypnotizes PERSEPHONE. She falls asleep in his arms. He carries her.  
 They're in a train.*

## HADES

*(To KHARON after a beat)* A bird  
 caught in a torrential storm. Can you  
 imagine that?

Feathers all soaked, can't fly because --  
 -- but then the sun comes out and '  
 That's what it's like. All that warmth  
 Makes flowers grow.

It's a necessity.

That's how I knew.

## KHARON

How did you know?

The fault of gods lies in their inability  
 to love rationally. They are jealous  
 creatures

Their love is possessive, all  
 consuming, like an overcharged solar  
 flare  
 It's dazzling. It's glorious. It can also  
 wreck havoc on earth.

The only force on earth that matches  
 its power, is the love of a mother

*Sound of the train*

# SCENE 4: My Little Girl

HERMES

Recording for the archive. Subject is a mother

THIRD MOTHER (Zoe)

When my little girl -- she's -- gone missing.

...

I was never gonna see her again. I know that. But at first I was  
Hoping -- Am I doing this right?

...

Well. At first I thought

How did I feel?

It felt like I got ripped apart that's how I feel -- Like a wolf just just just  
Well then after that I didn't feel anything. Nothing. Couldn't cry or  
Nothing.

Yeah

There was other stuff --

There was no time. I thought it might actually be a good thing  
Started thinking maybe she was rescued by some

...

Or some

...

Beats staying with me

I kept going with the rest of the group

My daughter was wearing a red shirt. Red like -- pomegranate -- If you seen her  
would you -- I know this isn't -- but

*KHARON passes her a cup. She drinks. Bottom up. Enters 4:48*

HERMES

Recording for the archive. Subject is a mother --

*KHARON stops HERMES. 4:48 looks like a soldier; face and clothes muddy,  
lunging towards KHARON. Falls down, stands up and tries again. This goes on a  
few times. Eventually, gives up. KHARON checks time, recognizes 4:48*

KHARON

4:48. You're early

*Blackout.*

*The sound of train.*

**SCENE 5: The Train**

HADES

You gotta stop with the texting.

*ARES appears. He seems to find everything HADES does amusing.*

ARES

I figured it out. Knight to G5. *(beat)* ... Come on! You said to alert you.

HADES

I said a heads up when there's a situation. Bishop to H2 check

ARES

"Situation", yes, King to H1. I remember, a revolt, a conflict,  
Things that end with the blazing gory of war  
Did you like that picture I sent?

HADES

It's not funny. Knight to G4.

ARES

Not the last one, the one with me on top of the -- Pawn to F4  
I always sent the coordinates too didn't I, as per requested?

HADES

I don't know if you realize but -- those places? Not selfie appropriate. Queen to E8

...

Take these off. You look like a douche. *(Grabs ARES' sun glasses)*

ARES

You're killing my buzz -- Pawn to G3

HADES

Just...

If you're gonna collect "trophies"

...

At least be subtle about it. Queen to H5

ARES

What? Just because there's no zest in your boring everlasting life -- and  
Who is this? A special guest! This is unusual.  
Does mademoiselle know where she's going?  
OhEmEffGee. You haven't told --  
She doesn't even know who you are.

HADES

Piss off

ARES

Hold that thought, let me just -- hashtag godssip.  
I'm on snapchat now by the way, you should follow me then I won't have to text you every time.  
Shit. Demi's gonna be pissed!  
What are you going to do when she realizes  
Wait, wait, let me guess you're gonna,  
"Explain"?

HADES

Fuck you

ARES

Let the spirit of fun course through your stone cold heart from time to time why don't you? Always so hostile -- no wonder Z doesn't like you.

*HADES pins ARES down against the wall of the train car*

HADES

Everything is a joke to you. Is that what you think? War? You think it's just, what? Sport? Everywhere you go there's just-- wreckages, you sociopath, you.  
You're like the patron saint of monsters. Or do you find kids with their heads bashed in to be a thing of beauty? You call yourself god of war, when all you're sponsoring, are a bunch of bullies. Why don't you take a look at yourself the next time you take a piss and tell me if there's pride on your rat face

*ARES instead fixes HADES' hair, etc. He might even dig out a comb for it.*

ARES

There. Gotta look more presentable before she wakes up.

...

You know... only if you want that is, I can give you the number of my tailor  
All right I'll shut up.

...

There is nothing righteous about war, and  
Of course it is just sport. It's all about muscles, who's got better toys --  
A popularity contest if you will -- and right now, I'm the fucking beauty queen.  
You used to be revered. There was a time --  
But things are changing bro. There are new currencies in the world.  
You gotta ally yourself with power because  
I mean, this isn't Hollywood, right? There are no heroes, no villains --

...



Why are we fighting? We're not supposed to be fighting. We're supposed to be on the --I'm on your side.

And you wanna be on my side --

Well, you wanna survive. Admit it. You're no hero.

I'm telling you all this because we're family and I love you -- believe it or not. Or course you don't believe me. Come on don't give me that --

You gotta adapt. Otherwise you get flushed down the toilet and I'll be there to wipe my ass with your feelings.

I hope you choose well when the time comes

Be smart about stuff that's all

...

You ready for, that?

*ARES wakes PERSEPHONE up*

HADES

Don't

ARES

Sweetheart

*(To Persephone)*

Let me introduce you. That's Hades, with an H -- you've met, yeah.

King to G2. Your move.

*Silence*

PERSEPHONE

You lied to me?

...

You lied to me.

HADES

I just --

PERSEPHONE

You just never told me shit and that's even worse you liar

HADES

I can't leave you out there. You'll get yourself killed.

PERSEPHONE

I can take care of myself.

HADES

I can't lose you to those -- I'd rather you hate me.

PERSEPHONE

Well you got it, I hate you

HADES

Even so

*PERSEPHONE tries to make a run, HADES catches her. They struggle.*

HADES

You are not going anywhere.

*PERSEPHONE bites him.*

HADES

Damn it

PERSEPHONE

Devil

HADES

Well that's not -- I'm not -- I'm not him.

PERSEPHONE

I've heard about your --

HADES

Whatever stuff you heard / about me

PERSEPHONE

Stuff. Yeah I've heard about stuff

HADES

They're just stuff. They're not true.

PERSEPHONE

Why are you doing this to me?

HADES

I told you

PERSEPHONE

Then you're a coward

HADES

A pacifist

PERSEPHONE

A coward

HADES

[Laughs] Yes a coward. Let the whole damn world call me a coward if it means I can keep you safe, by my side

PERSEPHONE

Great. So you just abducted me

HADES

Rescued you

PERSEPHONE

You abducted me and I'm supposed to be grateful?

HADES

I don't expect --

PERSEPHONE

All that secrecy -- I knew it. I knew it.

I should've known

I was fooling myself weren't I?

Thought it was just --

Should've known --

And you just made me a coward too. Since when do you make decisions for me?

I'm a goddess you fucking asshole nobody makes decisions for me.

...

Where are we going?

...

Where the fuck are we going?

HADES

The underworld.

PERSEPHONE

What did you do to me? Am I dead? Did you just kill me?

HADES

No you're not dead. I'm not dead. Warm. See?

*He holds out his hand. PERSEPHONE ignores him.*

PERSEPHONE

Then how are we -- How are we going -- we're on a train

## HADES

Taking the long way

...

Two ways to reach the underworld -- you cross river Styx, when you're, well, dead, or you take the train -- my place is -- not actually underground. The world is -- there's only -- like a Mobius strip. *(He makes a loop with a strip of paper)* There's just one continuous surface. You wanna go to the other side, you go all the way -- *(he cuts the loop from the middle to reveal one single circle)* See, one surface.

## PERSEPHONE

I know what a Mobius strip is you ass

## HADES

Well. Yeah. Death is a, sort of, short cut but -- you can also walk -- a couple of people have done it, Orpheus, Oedipus, huh,  
All the O names.  
The train's much more comfortable.

*Lights dim to almost blackout.*

We're almost there. Hold on to --  
Just hold on to something.

*Sound of a train pulling into station, its engine grumbling like an aged monster  
The train pulling into station. Blackout. Projection: an abstraction of violence.  
Massive snow and fireworks.*

## A MOTHER

*(Sings)* My child, my child, where have you been?  
Where did you sleep last night?

## MOTHERS

*(Sings)* In the pines, in the pines,  
where the sun don't ever shine

## HERMES

*(Sings)*  
Sending shivers down my spine

## A MOTHER

*(Sings)* Did you shiver all night long?

## HERMES

*(Sings)* Calling out to you  
Mother o mother o mother  
Will I remember your name if I  
Got on that one-way train?

**SCENE 6: 4:48**

*Silence. 4:48 seems apologetic about snapping. KHARON picks out a different record.*

4:48

I'm tired.

KHARON

I know. *(A beat)*

You are --

...

Let's get you a folder -- get you settled --

Once my boss comes back we'll file your memories proper

4:48

What for? I'm not getting them back --

KHARON

Who knows? Liability reasons. Possible future references.

I really don't have a say in this. Just --

Oh!

*KHARON looks up info in her folder*

*NOTE: No Man Can Find the War by Tunng.*

4:48

I just --

Thought we were the good guys.

KHARON

You *were*.

You're not going to hell if that makes you feel better.

4:48

But nobody was the good guy. Once you signed up for something like this, you're just as bad as the worst person on your team -- My commanders -- They are greedy! Their pockets got fat while we put our lives on the line. I've lost too many

friends. To swords, to bullets, bullets from machetes, from rifles, to bombs, car bombs, airstrikes, landmines, poison gas, hunger, broken hearts, broken minds. Did my daughter call my name in her sleep?

KHARON

You're early.

4:48

Yeah. Well.

KHARON

You shouldn't have done that -- suicides have so many side effects.

4:48

Can't you just get on with -- whatever you need to do?

*KHARON pulls out a form, writes on it, and hands it to 4:48*

KHARON

Initial here, and here, and here. And sign on the bottom -- where I marked -- They gave you a decent burial, flowers and flags, 21 salutes, whole package. I can show you if -- You should've just stuck it out for another few days -- now you're gonna have to --

Thank you. *(She takes back the signed form)*

Now drink this.

Go on.

## SCENE 7: Before Spring

*Lights shift. Some time has passed.*

*In the distance, PERSEPHONE sits by the edge of the pool, or river, or any body of water; her feet are dipped in the water. KHARON brings her a plate of food. She pushes it away.*

KHARON

It's almost spring  
 It's budding look, the tree  
 Thought it was just a piece of snowflake from afar,  
 One little twinkle of hope, still dormant,  
 Breathing in the cold air --  
 ...  
 Too cold. It's not gonna survive --  
 Always the coldest right before spring  
 It's always right before spring around here  
 But now that you're here. Maybe.  
 You're crying.  
 Don't. Your tears are dropping into the Styx.  
 See how they roll on the crest -- like pearls. Pretty  
 Not the easiest job though -- I gotta scoop them up.  
 They roll away and hide between the ebb and flow.  
 They'll dissolve -- If I don't scoop them out in time  
 There's too much heat. From all the emotions dissolving into the Styx  
 See all these people? Wandering by the shore?  
 Ghosts  
 The warmth from the water brought them closer --  
 A warm river makes them remember but  
 Memory is like cancer --

PERSEPHONE

Those ghosts. All day and night they pace back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, round and round and round and round and round

KHARON

A city fell the other day. It looks like a puff of smoke from faraway, all pink and yellow, and when it cleared nothing's left, not a sound -- silence is scarier than people screaming  
 It's not the worst part when you hear them screaming  
 Screaming means there's still hope  
 The worst part, the scariest part is when it's all silent  
 Because you know what it means when it's all silent  
 It means there's no hope  
 No one's left to bury the dead.  
 The war is still going on.

PERSEPHONE

Always a war going on somewhere

...

I'm hungry

KHARON

They're hungry too. The ghosts, always hungry -- hunger is about the only thing they remember.

PERSEPHONE

They look scared.

KHARON

Fear. That too.

PERSEPHONE

Are they scared of -- him?

KHARON

You still refuse to speak his name.

...

They're not scared of him --

They shouldn't anyway. Hades has nothing to do with their deaths. It's the *not* knowing part. That scares the shit out of anybody.

PERSEPHONE

He doesn't touch me. He wouldn't dare.

When he looks at me now I feel like there are bugs crawling under my skin. And he's always watching -- no matter where I go -- always watching.

I just want to go home. Can't you help me?

I was going to be a warrior. And now I'm a pottery gnome.

...

I wish I never knew -- it was -- nice, when I didn't know. I felt -- we had rendezvous then -- I guess it felt sexy, because of the secrecy. He would just show up and -- Was it just lust? But. How does love turn into hate in a flash?

We can run away together. Please. You know where the entrance is --

Tell me -- How do I get out of here? Please --

KHARON

I can't

PERSEPHONE

You can't?

...

You won't



KHARON

Look. Look at them.

PERSEPHONE

The hungry ghosts

KHARON

Ghosts holding pistols; ghosts in panic looking for their missing limbs; ghosts shivering; ghosts bumping into other ghosts, ghosts who used to be lovers and now they don't recognize each other. You're not a prisoner here Persephone.

PERSEPHONE

I don't belong here.

KHARON

He needs you. I'm not even saying this in a sentimental way, like "oh, he needs you", romantic, heart eyes, but he actually, needs you.

PERSEPHONE

So? I don't belong here.

KHARON

This place. You'll understand some day.

...

It's a place of rest, a place of remembrance -- remembering is not as easy as it sounds you know. There is power in remembrance.  
It's still safe here, for now. But war is -- like

*KHARON takes the food away. She's ready to leave.*

PERSEPHONE

It's like cancer. I know.

Whatever's happening on the other side, it's bound to spread across.

KHARON

He knows.

*PERSEPHONE laughs.*

KHARON

What?

PERSEPHONE

One surface. Right? Like a Mobius strip.

*HADES enters. KHARON exits.*

PERSEPHONE

What do you want?

*HADES hands her a pomegranate.*

*Silence*

*PERSEPHONE finally approaches. She takes out her dagger and pierces the pomegranate. It's her revenge. HADES drops the fruit and the knife. Juice mixes with blood drips down.*

*It starts to snow. Or maybe it's just ash.*

*Silence*

*He's thinking. She's thinking: what's he thinking about? PERSEPHONE exits.*

**SCENE 8: A Different Side**

ARES

Z was ok with --

Since when do you give a fuck about what that fucker has to say?

...

Yeah

...

Yeah.

Right? None of that would've happened if he kept it in his pants.

...

That's exactly what I said.

...

Well because he's a fucking asshole and doesn't deserve you.

...

Yeah. Really? You follow my snapchat? ... That was you?

...

Aw thank you!

...

Well I didn't know it was you -- cuz you never post anything.

...

Right? I mean that's best part! You can pretty much do anything, say anything, post anything without leaving a trace.

...

I know he's rich. But --

...

Well -- he's not -- What have you been smoking mama?

...

Sh... Listen.

...

Just listen. Fuck. Do you want your girl back or not?

Well then we'll have to work together lady --

...

Because he's a moron

...

It's not about needs. Of course he doesn't *need* anything, he's never needed anything in his life. He doesn't *need* Persephone, but he wanted her anyway didn't he...

Sorry sorry, sore subject.

...

That's what I'm saying -- what does he want hm? Know what I'm saying?

...

No. No you are not compromising. Leave it to me to --

...

Well like I said, leave it to me.

*ARES exits, still on the phone*

## HERMES

*(Part of it is a bit singsong. It's like Amanda Palmer's Dresden Doll period)*

Hermes has a bad feeling about this

Gossips. Premonitions -- The general goings-on

Hermes has an instinct about these things

Usually it starts with, Hermes has a bad feeling about this

Because Ares is a man without a plan but either way he wants to watch the world burn and jerk off to a tower of flames and the idea of walking away from an explosion makes him feel like a fucking action star in a fucking blockbuster

Because Ares is a man without a plan and Persephone is miserable

Persephone is miserable because she hasn't figured out what other emotion can possibly be appropriate for her right now since everything she's ever believed in turns out to be shit and she wants to make a difference right now, and she wants to stop feeling like a pottery gnome right now

Because Ares is a man without a plan, Persephone is miserable, and Hades never gets a break.

Hades never gets a break because even when he has something good going it usually turns sour and there's also the thing about his archive, what is it about his archive, who knows WHO KNOWS maybe one day he'll figure it out because otherwise it's all gonna rot, all that knowledge is gonna rot

Ares is a man without a plan, Persephone is miserable, Hades never gets a break, and Dionysus is coming to town.

Dionysus is coming to town to speak nonsensical gibberish and everyone will think it's chicken soup for the soul because everything sounds so damn inspirational when you're drunk out of your fucking mind.

*(Sing)*

All the letters from the front line sounds like suicide notes now

All the romantics are writing Dadaist poems now

All the gods are plotting exit routes for themselves now

All the kids are talking like philosophers now

All the letters from the front line sounds like suicide notes now

All the romantics are writing Dadaist poems now

All the gods are plotting exit routes for themselves now

All the kids are talking like philosophers now

**SCENE 9: The Archive**

*Lights up. The Archive.*

She'll come around.

KHARON

...

How is she doing?

HADES

Sulking

KHARON

I'm being selfish aren't I?

HADES

Yes

KHARON

*Silence*

I'm not proud of what I did.

HADES

Kidnapping and forcing her to marry you?

KHARON

I'm asking her to be my queen, my absolute equal, to govern the world of the dead

HADES

Real smooth

KHARON

Nobody's perfect.

HADES

It could've gone differently if you

KHARON

You're gonna say I told you so

HADES

I was gonne say you're an idiot.

KHARON

HADES

It's just

KHARON

If you took a little more pride in who you are, what you do

HADES

It has to be her. Persephone. She's the most powerful. Not that she can beat me in arm wrestling match but. She makes flowers grow. And that's the most powerful thing. Not killing hundreds with one strike, not pulverizing stones with bare hands, but making life happen, a single breath, a secret that's a kiss, a tear that makes you remember

She makes it possible, for the end to become a new beginning, like the first budding leaf in the snow, just before spring.

KHARON

And you're saying all this, to *me*?

HADES

...

Yeah. You're right. And the new select --

KHARON

Are you sure about her?

HADES

I have to be.

KHARON

I wish you'd tell me what's going on. It's making me uneasy that's all. All this --

HADES

It'd all make sense. Soon. What do we have today?

KHARON

More refugees. Civilians. None of them are buried because -- the island was running out of space

...

We should discuss --

HADES

How many?

KHARON

37 from last week still detained. The doctors and --  
129 more this week from --

HADES  
They're here already?

KHARON  
So, with 4:48, have you started to --

HADES  
Let them / in

KHARON  
We're about / to --

HADES  
Just -- they can stay in the hall for now. Put up some / dividers and

KHARON  
/ But

HADES  
Open up Elysium.

KHARON  
Elysium?

HADES  
It's fine. I'll go talk to them.

KHARON  
Well you said --

HADES  
Extraordinary times extraordinary measures

KHARON  
We already -- We're at capacity boss.

HADES  
Oh  
...  
You got a list?  
...  
No list I see.

KHARON  
So, let them in?

HADES

Never thought this day would come. At capacity. Remember when we joked about how the underworld is like Canada? We'll never run out of space.

KHARON

It's not normal. The sand storms, the red snow -- none of this is normal. The archive is full. We don't have enough time to -- the river's dried up -- We can't have them keeping --

HADES

No. We'll keep them in here (*points his head*) --  
Not forever -- just until the river's flowing again and --  
We'll get through it.  
Those ghosts -- every one of them.  
Used to be someone's sweetheart.

KHARON

They still are.

HADES

Will you  
...

KHARON

I'll let / them in

HADES

Will you be a friend to her?

KHARON

...  
She'll come around

*Silence*

Would you like / me to (stay).

HADES

It's not fair. I wish I could let you go.  
You're stuck here with me.  
*I'm* stuck here with me.

KHARON

I'll --



HADES

You deserve better than this -- this fucking, dump. I deserve better than this.  
 Nobody *feels* anything around here. Everything is just -- a blur -- because  
 Well they've forgotten everything -- they get to.  
 Well I get to remember, everyone, EVERYONE, every -- thing!  
 Every detail every cut and bruise and burn and gash and bullet wound, stab wound,  
 bite mark, every piece of debris every piece of broken body part everywhere  
 EVERYWHERE!

...

I wish spring would finally come -- I need her to bring it here, spring. Then the river  
 will flow again.

KHARON

...

I'll let them in

*The DOCTORS, a WOMAN WITH A BABY and HERMES enter, distraught*

FIRST DOCTOR

I was told that -- He says you'll listen if I --

HERMES

Subject is

...

He was wearing -- it's just a kid -- He was wearing a red t-shirt,

FIRST DOCTOR

We were stationed in a city under siege.

...

It was no place for children.

HERMES

Khaki shorts that go over the knees

FIRST DOCTOR

Those kids haven't been vaccinated for over a year!

HERMES

He's got only one shoe on. No socks.

FIRST DOCTOR

I'm concerned. I'm really concerned.

HERMES

When I saw him, he was facing down.

FIRST DOCTOR

I hear their coughing fits. Those kids.

HERMES

Usually I try not to

...

So I carried him in my arms.

FIRST DOCTOR

// Measles, polio, pertussis, typhoid, hepatitis A, hepatitis E.

HERMES

// Away from the water.

FIRST DOCTOR

// I'm afraid of everything nowadays.

HERMES

// I couldn't look at him

FIRST DOCTOR

The water was no good.

HERMES

I couldn't look at that water. That water. It's where I grew up.

When I was little I used to come here.

Everything gets washed ashore.

FIRST DOCTOR

And then there's the bombings. Every day. I couldn't operate --

HERMES

Seashells mostly. I keep them in my desk.

FIRST DOCTOR

I am physician, not surgeon!

HERMES

When you put a seashell next to your ear, you can hear the songs of the Aegean Sea.

FIRST DOCTOR

Everything smelled like burned flesh.

HERMES

How can I ever forget about this?

FIRST DOCTOR

I wish I could forget about this.

HERMES

// I wish I could

FIRST DOCTOR

// Make me forget.

HERMES

Forget about all of this

*Silence. You can almost feel the air coagulating all around.*

KHARON

Are you all right?

HERMES

Yeah.

Yeah of course -- You wanna keep going?

*Silence*

KHARON

Boss?

*HADES gives a gesture (Texts of Doctor's speech from / inspired by personal accounts at MSF website)*

FIRST DOCTOR

We've been under siege for two years.

Air strikes. Terrifying air strikes. Every three days it's a massacre. Hundreds dead -- hundreds injured. I saw a child -- her whole arm got ripped off, that child! And a woman -- her face was a burnt mess. And a man -- those legs were covered in dried blood. Black blood -- like tar.

Sometimes we go two, three days, no sleep. We're running out of body bags.

Then the sand storm came. A sand storm came with red winds. So the air strikes stopped. They stopped, at least for a moment.

The world must have gone mad. A sand storm!

We are trying our best. Saving lives -- that's kept us going. There's nothing else we can do. It is what it is. We are just struggling -- to survive.

Imagine, the world couldn't stop its violence but a sand storm did.

That child -- I will never forget: she was badly burnt -- her face. Her arms, legs -- a bloody mess -- she was laughing! Just laughing, and laughing --

It's like she wasn't afraid of anything -- she just laughed, laughed at everything.

*Sound of airstrike: A memory.*

SECOND DOCTOR

Where the hell are we?

FIRST DOCTOR

The last thing I remember was that -- bomb

SECOND DOCTOR

Didn't they say hospital properties have military immunity? What a joke.

FIRST DOCTOR

This your first assignment?

SECOND DOCTOR

My girlfriend tried to talk me out of it, but I never thought --

FIRST DOCTOR

Shhhh -- Listen. Hear that?

SECOND DOCTOR

Planes.

FIRST DOCTOR

Those goddamn planes.

THIRD DOCTOR

Planes. I remember those -- Came in the late afternoon and circled above us. So we waited. We thought, well, that's it. Is this gonna be it. Is this gonna be the time? Are we gonna become casualties? Are we gonna become numbers?

...

Three rockets exploded in a town nearby. Apartment buildings and shops turned to rubble. A state of hysteria -- families looking for their loved ones, neighbours searching for neighbours, everyone yelling, everyone scrambling, everyone pushing everyone over, everyone looking / for someone

SECOND DOCTOR

Everyone's gone mad.

FIRST DOCTOR

There are only 12 beds / in the hospital.

SECOND DOCTOR

There are too many / of them.

FIRST DOCTOR

We don't have enough staff. Keep them out. Keep them out! / Keep! Them! Out!

SECOND DOCTOR

Everyone calling out, help, help, / help, help, help, help

THIRD DOCTOR

I wish I'd go deaf. Everyone calling out names, calling out for help.

*Silence*

FIRST DOCTOR

Bodies everywhere -- on the tables, in the hallways, on the floor.  
How many have we got?

SECOND DOCTOR

About 40

FIRST DOCTOR

How many have we got?

SECOND DOCTOR

65!

FIRST DOCTOR

How many have we got?

SECOND DOCTOR

About 85 -- 91, 93, / 94

FIRST DOCTOR

Can't take -- Keep them OUT!

## SECOND DOCTOR

We gotta take more. There are more -- Look out the window, look! /  
We gotta keep going.

## FIRST DOCTOR

Go shut the doors, shut the doors. Quick, / quick! Go!

## THIRD DOCTOR

I tripped over a body on the floor -- bodies everywhere on the floor. My hands, my face, all smeared with blood. The walls, our clothes, our white gowns -- everything was tinted red. The sun was setting. I saw out the window the sky's tinted red.

## SECOND DOCTOR

We are out of blood bags!

## ALL (doctors, their voices in cacophony)

Use mine. (3) Take mine. (1) Take it. (2) I'm type O. (3) I'm universal donor. (1)

*The gate of the hospital was blasted open. White out. Silence. KHARON brings them up one by one and HADES takes their memories, which dissolve into blissful oblivion. Like a ritual.  
And they walks away.*

## KHARON

Do we keep going? Boss?

*HADES gives another gesture "yes"  
The FOURTH MOTHER holds a baby wrapped in a red shirt. The baby cries.*

## FOURTH MOTHER

They're not gonna find us here my little bunny. Sshhh -- sshhh -- Shall we do a head count my bunny? Let's do a head count. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 8, 9, 10, 11 ...16, 17 18 -- 21 22 23 24, 25, 26. 27, 28, 29, 30 31, 32, 33, 34, 34? Who's missing? Who's missing? There's supposed to be 35. Who -- One, two, three four. Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven --

## HERMES

Sshhhhhhh--

*She stops the other woman from counting*

They're here.

*Silence*

FOURTH MOTHER

It's the pipes. Listen!

HERMES

Did you block the trap door?

FOURTH MOTHER

Who's missing?

HERMES

Did you count yourself?

*Silence*

FOURTH MOTHER

Oh.

*She silently starts to count again, mouthing the numbers.*

HERMES

How's the little one?

FOURTH MOTHER

Feverish. Been crying all morning. Won't stop. He won't stop crying. They gonna come, they gonna find us, they gonna shoot us.

Oh god please, please stop crying.

*She begins to cry herself.*

HERMES

Sshhhhh -- they're here.

## FOURTH MOTHER

*(To the baby)* Sshhh -- sshh --

*She rocks the baby. The baby won't stop crying.*

She covers the baby with a scarf. The cry begins to be muffled, until eventually everything is silent.

The woman takes away the scarf from the baby's face and looks at her baby. She had killed it.

## HERMES

They're gone.

*THE FOURTH MOTHER hums a lullaby until she can no longer go on. Silence. KHARON goes to take her baby away. KHARON holds the WOMAN like a mother. HADES takes away the woman's memories. He feels drunk with other people's pasts, like under a powerful dose of anesthesia. He begins to cry as if his emotion is ruptured by something unknown. KHARON holds him like a mother. PERSEPHONE approaches. She's holding the pomegranate. She pulls the dagger out.*

## A DUET of HADES &amp; PERSEPHONE

H: The first

P: time I fell

H: in love it was

P: for the sake of

H: beauty

P: Out of

H: all the recycled

P: faces, that one glimpse

H: was a jolt of electricity

P: I remember the shape

H: of her shoulder

P: beneath

H: the palm of my hand

P: His eyelids trembling

H: next to

P: my lips

H: The next time I was

P: in love, it was more of

H: an idea, of the woman

P: who holds the answers



H: to all  
 P: the world's  
 H: mysteries, and she is  
 P: mystery  
 H: herself. And I  
 P: wanted him because otherwise  
 H: Because how did I ever live without her?

P: I fell in love  
 H: again with  
 P: someone who  
 H: loved me back in practical ways  
 P: A bouquet of tampons rather than  
 H: chocolate. She carries around, and that's just for me,  
 P: Sanitizing wipes. He built me  
 H: A plant sampling kit, and remembers  
 P: Important dates for me. Dentist's appointment  
 H: Or my boss' birthday

P: The last time I  
 H: found love was when I  
 P: realized that  
 H: she makes me  
 P: better  
 H: I began to see  
 P: things differently  
 H: Took time to  
 P: breath, and grew  
 H: Wiser  
 P: Stronger  
 H: Kinder

H: I became myself  
 P: I became myself  
 H: And the luckiest part is  
 P: the luckiest part is that it's always  
 H: It's always been the same  
 P: The same person that I  
 H: I fell for the same person over  
 P: over and over  
 H: It's hard work

P: It's stupid

*She rips the pomegranate apart. Seeds like gems fall on the ground.*

KHARON

It's beautiful -- The red --

PERSEPHONE

Like blood (*somewhat uncertain*)

KHARON

Like rubies

PERSEPHONE

Like blood. (*More assured*)

KHARON

The fruit of beauty

PERSEPHONE

The fruit of the dead

KHARON

The fruit of mystery

PERSEPHONE

The fruit of the dead -- Shaped like a hand grenade.  
Opens up like a heart -- And the seeds fall out like tears

...

Let me help them. Tell me what to do.

*PERSEPHONE thinks about it. She plucks out one pomegranate seed from the fruit, like pulling the safety lock from a hand grenade. She holds up the pomegranate, as if ready to throw. Like opening a Pandora box.*

HERMES: Do you know who shot you?

VOICE: I don't know.

KHARON: Do you know who broke your arm?

VOICE: I don't know.

HADES: Do you know who blew up your car when you're driving your sick child to the hospital?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Who shot you in the back when you're digging in the rubbles, hoping that your cousin's still alive?

VOICE: I don't know.

KHARON: Do you know who blew up your house?

VOICE: I don't know.

HADES: Do you know who sent the bombers to level your town and now two of your sons are deaf?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Do you know who beat you?

VOICE: I don't know.

KHARON: Who cut off your brother's head?

VOICE: I don't know.

HADES: Do you know who stomped on your daughter's little hand and pretended not to hear her crying?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Who kicked and jumped on your father and left him penniless?

VOICE: I don't know.

KHARON: who attacked the hospital when you finally got there and you thought there's some hope yet?

VOICE: I don't know.

HADES: Do you know who gave you their last piece of bread when you're starving, delirious?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Who offered you a drink of their water when you felt like there are bricks shoved down your throat?

VOICE: I don't know.

KHARON: Who shielded you with their body when the grenade went off?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Do you know who was fighting next to you in the dust and sulfur air?

VOICE: I don't know.

HADES: Who opened their doors for you when monsters are roaming the streets?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Do you know who fed your child when you're no longer living?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES: Do you know who picked up your rifle and kept fighting?

VOICE: I don't know.

HERMES

I'm done.

....

I can't --

...

I'm tired of collecting nightmares.

KHARON

I know.

HERMES

Don't worry. I won't -- I'm not gonna quit.

...

Remember when I once sang love songs?

*Silence. They remember.*

HERMES

All you're getting is bad news nowadays. No more love songs.

KHARON

If you want you could -- take a day off.  
Boss?

HERMES

You know what happens if I did.

...

See you around then

KHARON

Wait

*She means "thank you". HERMES and HADES exit*

PERSEPHONE

They used to tell me that the underworld is where nightmares reside  
I mean, my mom, and other people who imagined that -- I think they meant  
something else -- Three headed dogs, ladies with snakes coming out of their hair, or  
was it snakes were their hair; A giant caldron bubbling venoms with reptiles and  
insects and maggots crawling under dead skin, a soup for the bad people of course,  
an ocean of swords, a forest made of flames -- I was hoping Hades would, I don't  
know, reveal his true self, something monstrous -- maybe horns, or sharp fangs. I  
might be thinking of vampires.

Vampires are not real. And Hades is just the same as always -- lonely.

But they're not, people, are not, wrong -- about the nightmares.

Lately everybody has a nightmare story when they arrive. Before their memories  
are tucked away

I imagined something very different before I got here. I imagined a place of  
punishment, scorching heat, or slimy, damp, like beneath a swamp

But it's not a scary place. It's a refuge. Cold, dusty -- you can't tell whether it's  
snowing, or whether it's just ashes -- And hollow, even when every last inch of the  
place is now filled with --

The first things I saw were the tents. Colorless, identical, tents, rows and rows of  
them on an open field, miles and miles of them -- And in each one of those tents, are  
people -- who no longer need to run, or look over their shoulder for stray bullets  
every step they take -- People who weren't supposed to be here for another year,  
for another decade. Their memories are tucked away

And so they wait

*Sound of train.*

## SCENE 10: The Train (Reprise)

HADES

*(Hades wears noise-cancelling headphones.)*

There is a reason I don't do prayers. They ask the same thing, bring my baby back, bring my lover back, bring grandma back, bring them back, it's not their time, it's not fair, take me instead, make sure they are well fed, make sure they get my message, my money, the clothes we burned for them, make sure they know we haven't forgotten about them.

Give us a sign

I made this a policy. No prayers. I won't answer them. I can't take care of your mom, your son, your high school drama teacher, your pet goldfish.

They don't remember YOU.

That's kind of the whole point.

So people generally hate me now.

Kharon deals with them, the prayers. Sometimes they go to Persephone instead.

Then she'll come over and we'll fight about it.

Then we'll make up and we'll just be -- polite to each other for a while. Then I'll kind of feel bad, maybe, how about just one tiny exception, maybe just this once, we'll send one of them back, pick the one that's --

No that's exactly why I don't do prayers. People have no idea what's best for the dead. I've been doing this job for the past -- I don't know -- It is a job. I'm called a king but it's a job. Drew the short end of the stick back then. The "select".

Couldda been worse off

There's nothing I can do. Why the false hope? I could lie to them.

No.

This train -- it's my transportation. If you need to talk to -- your dead wife, for instance -- If you absolutely have to, well, you'll have to walk it. Honestly it's not that bad. We can facilitate some kind of -- well.

We keep their memories, in the archive mostly. The archive is ordered by T.O.D.

That's the main purpose of the underworld really. An archive. We keep record of everything, for the guests. They're all my guests. And I don't make mistakes. Not usually. There are contracts to be signed, rules to be followed.

...

If the archive is full... It hasn't happened since our expansion after the Trojan war. But recently -- It's been an intense couple of decades. Sometimes I'll have to jam everything in my head. It's not the most comfortable thing.

...

I like atheists. You don't believe me. But they actually get it right. The basics of death -- just, memories discontinued. There is no thereafter, and I don't need people to believe in me, clap their hands. This isn't Neverland. Persephone always says, we should do something. What something I said

Something something

*Sound of train pulling into station. Sound of a glorious party.*

## ACT II – Scene 1: Dionysus

*DIONYSIUS enters, in a toy car pushed by Ganymede, or any of the rest of the consorts*

DIONYSUS

The best thing about wine is not the  
hobblywobblyblubblyleggidysplitdoplarbuzzychluzy \*blow\* \*blow\*

*Looks at the crowd*

*Really, looks at the crowd, like, takes a pair of glass out, wipes the glasses and then looks at the crowd.*

You guys

You guys look like a puff of weak, pointless, fart, or like a stack of burnt up firewood, and then some dog went and peed on it.

*DIONYSIUS points to the first person while hijacking the bar*

You get a glass of wine

You get a glass of wine

You get a glass of wine

Everybody gets a glass of wine

*DIONYSUS hijacks the sound booth*

*(Through a mic)* The best thing about wine is when that first explosionalitiy confusary tantali sweet is bitter bitter is sour sour is floating like a bell ringing the sound is bright so bright bright bright it hurts my eyes and the light is sweet sweet sweet wine is memory is swallowing history in a gulp of fire fire fire putting eternity in your gut welcoming defeat praising apathicary apathitory apathicality apathy apathy apathy \*breathes\*

*Music, lights, DIONYSIUS gets all the audiences on stage for a dance party.*

*4:48, meanwhile, is discovered at the back of the audience. PERSEPHONE enters. She wears a ridiculous mask. She takes it off as she approaches. Dance music in the background.*

*She sways a little to the music. (Like a rock star)*

DIONYSUS

When I was a sexy young thing. I said to the man upstairs, hey, I want to fix whatever's wrong out there. And, you know how it is, there's so much wrong out there. I'll make you proud. I can make the whole world love me. I'll even sacrifice myself, because that's the way you make glory last, and make the victory sweet and

shit. I wanted people to fall at my feet and weep their tears of joy, and I wanted them to love me for my strength, my heroism, my compassion, my genius, my wisdom -- But the man said to me, shut up and make yourself pretty.

...

And pretty was what I became. Put on a crown of vine, put on a mask so lavish and eventually it became my face. Because when you're a god, you do everything to the extreme.

Razzle-dazzle, accessorize; I am fabulous. I am delicious.

Take one look at me and I'll make your mouth water with my skin -- soft like jelly and luminous like pearl; my lips are like a pair of fresh grapes, or dew drops trembling in the morning air just before sunrise.

I thought I was to be made the god of beauty

But I became a clown.

I dance the dance of a drunkard and speaks gibberish because I'm looked at by hungry eyes, touched by lusty fingers, and gulped down to extinguish, or rekindle the burning desires in the pit of men and women's stomachs -- they come to me in moments of weakness or ecstasy, usually in search of an invisible shelter called Oblivion

And a state of benign lunacy

But they never listened -- they never heard the whispers I've hidden within the aroma of summer fruits and fermented memories.

There are but few who have found what I've hidden, the truth of my desire. The mead of prophets has a difficult consistency -- I'm willing to offer it all, my blood, my life, my spirit, they've only ever needed to ask.

But few are willing to indulge

In the thought that wine is more intoxicating than kerosene, and that the mad songs from a poet's lips are more powerful than semiautomatics,

Or nukes screaming a man-child's unsatisfied midnight urges; that promises of love always conquer reasons of hate; protectors of peace can be destroyed, but never defeated, and ideas cannot be killed

*Lights up in the audience.*

PERSEPHONE

You are -- It's you isn't it?

4:48

What?

PERSEPHONE

The select. Is that what are they call you? The one who's gonna remember everything. That's you

4:48

Except I lost my name

PERSEPHONE

I'm sorry.

4:48

Not your fault.

PERSEPHONE

So what do they --

4:48

4:48

PERSEPHONE

And is that --

4:48

Yeah.

PERSEPHONE

Can I --

*4:48 gives way. She sits down next to 4:48. She looks at 4:48 curiously.*

PERSEPHONE

Didn't you drink the water from river Styx?

4:48

It's not water

PERSEPHONE

You know what I mean.

4:48

What is it anyway?



## PERSEPHONE

Didn't you finish it?

4:48

Every last drop -- Didn't taste too bad.  
It tasted sorta like orange soda

*She laughs.*

## PERSEPHONE

Supposed to taste like your favourite drink when you're alive  
Orange soda?

4:48

What's going to happen to me?

## PERSEPHONE

I don't know. End up working here, maybe? -- I've been helping Kharon with the  
archive -- she's got tons of busy work.

4:48

Maybe.

...

The worst part is --

I'm not even sure what's my memory, and what's --

I remember stuff that's never happened to me.

Memories of someone else's, of entire nations,

Centuries and centuries of memories --

I close my eyes and I see every face, every detail from Trojan War, from first  
Messenian War, Second Messenian War, Punic War, First Sacred War, from Ionian  
Revolt, Persian War, First Peloponnesian War, Samian War, Corinthian War, Second  
Peloponnesian War, Boeotian War, Second Sacred War, Social War, Third Sacred  
War, Gallic War, Syrian War, Second Punic War, Macedonian War, Cretan War,  
Revolt of the Maccabees, Gothic War, Arab-Byzantine War, Byzantine-Bulgarian  
War, First Crusade, Second Crusade, Third Crusade, Fourth Crusade, Byzantine Civil  
War, the first time, the second time, the third, the fourth, the fifth, Ottoman Venetian  
War, Turkish War, Souliote War, Greek War of Independence, Greek Civil Wars,  
Revolts, men's revolts, women's revolts, children's revolts, Balkan War, World War I.

World War II, Greek Civil War, Korean War, Gulf War, Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, in Afghanistan, War for oil, for gold, for bread, for silk, tea, for power, for snot, for chocolate, the right to have sex with women, with men, the right to have children, to not have children, to travel, to have bath water, to breathe

PERSEPHONE

Pomegranate?

4:48

What?

..

Oh. No thanks.

PERSEPHONE

You should come to the dance. It's the Anthesteria -- three days of hard-core partying, masks, wine -- a celebration of painless, flavorless, emptiness --  
Scream you head off and nobody's gonna judge, nobody's gonna care either  
That Dionysus is a piece of work. Infinitely wise, or the complete opposite --

*She stands up.*

PERSEPHONE

Dance with me

4:48

*(Thinks.)* No.

PERSEPHONE

Why not?

4:48

I --

PERSEPHONE

Everyone likes to dance.

4:48

I don't know how.

PERSEPHONE

Nonsense. Of course you do.  
Everyone knows how to dance.

4:48

Forgot -- I guess.

PERSEPHONE

Nonsense!

*She gets up, or rather, bounces up. She pulls 4:48 up, who gets up reluctantly.  
She dances. She swings around, and around, and around. She tries to push 4:48  
down. She tries to hit 4:48. 4:48 blocks her fists.  
She throws herself on the ground, panting. 4:48 doesn't know what to do.*

4:48

I hate this place.

PERSEPHONE

I'm supposed to be offended.  
I'm supposed to be the queen around here you know.  
That sounds so strange. I never wanted to be queen, of anything.  
I feel more like a prisoner than a queen  
Kharon says that it wasn't always so crowded. I'm a little afraid of her. She seems --  
She's afraid of Hades, which is totally nonsense because he trusts her with  
everything. And Hades is a little afraid of me.  
More than a little I should say.  
I think he's trying to figure it out --  
All the shit that's been happening? But there're just too many problems.  
I fucking hate this place.

4:48

Don't talk like that.

PERSEPHONE

Oh come on!

4:48

I have -- had -- have -- my daughter. She would've been your age by now. We got separated when -- I had to send her away -- I -- You remind me of --

PERSEPHONE

You know that's just an illusion right?

4:48

Just -- don't talk like that.

PERSEPHONE

Everyone around here's gonna remind you of someone. Kharon told me. What's her name? Your daughter.

*Pause, she waits for her to answer.*

Fine, don't tell me. My mom's like that too. "Don't talk like that -- watch your language Persephone," or -- "don't slouch!" She must be so worried about me -- "don't forget to dry your hair you're gonna catch a cold -- don't stay up too late it's bad for your skin, don't ever, let men take advantage of you, Persephone", oh, and, you know, "don't forget to use protection" --

4:48

I fucking hate this place.

*PERSEPHONE starts to laughs.*

*She laughs, and laughs, until she suddenly stops.*

*Still doesn't know what to do.*

PERSEPHONE

You wanna go home, don't you? Well tough. You can't. I wanted to go home too -- I miss my mom. So much. I kicked and scratched and

4:48

Kharon.

PERSEPHONE

Yeah?

4:48

She is -- in charge here?

PERSEPHONE

Basically.

4:48

Well she asked me if I was ready --  
 I mean, ready for what --  
 There's something she's not telling me  
 Tell you what -- I'd do anything, if I could just --  
 It's a blessing, to be able to forget.

*Silence*

PERSEPHONE

You wanna hear something funny?  
 Well it's not really --  
 Every human I know wants to be immortal. You've thought of it too -- You know I'm  
 right. I never asked to be -- What a strange title. Goddess.  
 It doesn't come with a user's manual. The dummy's guide to eternal life  
 I didn't have a choice. My parents are both --  
 I thought I did. Like if I pissed them off enough, my parents, I'd get out of it -- the  
 responsibilities -- I did everything, tattoos, nose rings, not doing my homework on  
 purpose, falling in love with some guy I'm definitely not supposed to... All that. None  
 of it even made any sense...  
 I'd rather be mortal. Then at least if I screwed up...  
 Like there's an end to it, you know?  
 Mom used to say it's normal to feel that way,  
 She says it's a gift and one day I'll find the right way to use it -- even if I didn't  
 recognize it at first.  
 Ares says it's our birthright  
 A privilege  
 Enjoy your luck he says, it's not like everyone gets to pick and choose.  
 Couldda been worse off  
 He's not wrong. Yeah  
 Hades says it's just a job -- A curse really  
 For him, I think  
 Kharon's in love with him. He probably knows.  
 He knows.  
 It's not like she's ever gonna do anything about it

My father says there's a purpose in -- that everything happens for a reason.  
 It's all bullshit! There are consequences to everything they've done. They think they  
 can get away with anything just because --  
 Ares says it's a popularity contest. The only way gods stay alive I guess, being  
 worshipped, adored, revered, feared, all that -- I guess he's doing great for himself  
 He's always done great himself  
 What an ass  
 I've learned a lot about life lately  
 It's all just memories  
 Pretty ironic... learning about life being so close to deaths but  
 Life is. Just memories  
 There is so much pain in the act of remembering.  
 But when a life is over, when all is forgotten, all that's sweet and bitter  
 It's the end of the world. The start of another --  
 And the memories are never really gone.  
 The purpose of gods is so that memories of the worlds are kept alive  
 Even if

*4:48 stands up and gestures PERSEPHONE to dance*

PERSEPHONE

Dude are we gonna dance?

4:48

Dude... you betcha we're gonna dance

PERSEPHONE

We're gonna dance!

*Music drowns out their voices. A song starts to play. The song is at the same  
 time ridiculous and profoundly moving under the right circumstances. I suggest  
 something by the Cranberries. DIONYSUS lip-synchs to the song. He or she  
 might be covered in gold, or wine, at once.  
 At this point GENYMEDE should start to get the audiences back to their seat. So  
 eventually they switch back to their original positions, with only DIONYSUS on  
 stage.  
 A sharp blackout at the climax of the song  
 Silence.*

## Scene 2: Ares

ARES

Talk about the mind of an addict

...

Riding motorcycle on full speed

20 shots of quality Italian espresso

Clubbing till 4am, EDM music, strobe lights, Fela Kuti and Mr. Brightside and

Rihanna and vodka Redbull vodka rebull vodka redbull so your head's swimming

but your mind's on fire

It only lasts until it doesn't

Tried the red pills, the green pills, the pink the purple the yellow the whole fucking rainbow until all that's left is a quiet thumping behind the eye sockets.

Remember having this feeling of something brand new? Like, that new car smell?

Yeah, think about that for a second. I get turned on by that new car smell, or is it the inevitable backseat sex, an unfamiliar brand of cologne on a beautiful man, or

sometime women, I'm not picky

But I needed more than that

The pride of a war god needs to be nourished by blood.

So I follow the carnage for a fix of energy boost

And I'll stand by the side of the bullies if it means they're on a winning streak

Human cruelty, that's not on me

They never needed me to fire the first shot, or drop a nuclear bomb

Do I benefit from it? Of course

Do I have a choice you ask?

Talk about the mind of an addict.

DIONYSUS

You want a swig of this?

ARES

Oh you.

*ARES takes DIONYSUS' flask and drinks. He puts down the flask. Pulls DIONYSUS over. They kiss, like wild animals.*

*Then they stop. Their emotions vanished as quick as they consumed them. DIONYSUS takes the flask back and drink. It's empty. Disappointed.*

DIONYSUS

You're an asshole

ARES

Thank you

DIONYSUS

Did you lose again?

ARES

I don't care about losing.

DIONYSUS

You care about losing to your sister you do.  
You always lose to your sister. Why don't you just --

ARES

Because she drives me nuts. With her self-righteous -- flobberjabbering whenever, er, she gets her ways.

DIONYSUS

What are you doing here anyway?

ARES

/Free booze. Whatever this is -- got a real kick

DIONYSUS

You never come to Anthesteria.

ARES

Well now that I know Dionysus is such a great kisser.

DIONYSUS

Come on now

ARES

I gotta talk to Hades. Where is he anyway?

DIONYSUS

Out

ARES

What do you mean out? This is his party.

DIONYSUS

It's my party. He just lets me use the venue.  
I don't know where he went. He's been going out there regularly

ARES

Out there?

DIONYSUS

The east, the west, the north, the south, the top, the bottom -- or probably --  
They're remodeling the camp after the one -- er -- somewhere



ARES

Persephone's done a number on our old hermit -- How's she?

DIONYSUS

Hungry

ARES

Thank god

DIONYSUS

Hm?

ARES

Demeter wants me to make sure that she didn't eat anything, you know, from here?

DIONYSUS

I saw her --

ARES

Speak of the devil

*PERSEPHONE enters with her pomegranate.*

PERSEPHONE

It's you

ARES

We've met. Remember? On the train -- you gonna eat that?

PERSEPHONE

No.

ARES

You wanna gimme -- ?

PERSEPHONE

That's all right.

ARES

Well, your mother wouldn't be very happy if you ate that

DIONYSUS

I'm gonna go -- get some more wine, and, er, entertain some guests.

*DIONYSUS exits.*

PERSEPHONE

What do you know about my mother?

*ARES gets close to her.*

ARES

We're Snapchat buddies. Well, more like, she follows my snaps and we chat about it on the phone afterwards. Old people, am I right? She misses you. Everything on her land is dying.

She's depressed.

You know that speech?

PERSEPHONE

What are you talking about?

ARES

*The speech. From Hamlet, you know the one I'm talking about? When he was saying he's lost all his mirth and what not?*

PERSEPHONE

Yeah we all had to memorize it at school

ARES

Exactly.

That speech. But like, your mom.

PERSEPHONE

Oh.

*ARES takes the fruit and the dagger from PERSEPHONE.  
He puts the dagger in his jacket and toss the fruit aside.*

PERSEPHONE

Hey!

ARES

Relax. I'm just making sure --

I came to take you back -- to her.

PERSEPHONE

And how are you gonna do that?

ARES

I got a plan.

PERSEPHONE

Yeah right.

ARES

And once you're back with the living, lady D will be all happy, maybe the two of us could go out?

*PERSEPHONE pushes his away, hard*

ARES

Look. I'm being an ally to you. Don't I deserve some reward?

PERSEPHONE

How are you making this about you?

ARES

I'm not! What? Your mother's ok with it. She likes me.

PERSEPHONE

Am I a piece of meat? Everyone just can't wait to wrap me up for some men -- Can I marry your daughter? Sure, but she might freak out by your identity so maybe just kidnap her. You ever pause for a second and think, shit, maybe she doesn't like that?

ARES

I'm doing your mother a favor cuz she's nice to me all right? Just -- chill out. What? Not like you're in love with him now or -- wait, are you?

PERSEPHONE

We're --

ARES

What?

PERSEPHONE

We're civil

ARES

I mean, if you didn't wanna go home anymore, just say so --

PERSEPHONE

Of course I want to go home.

### Scene 3: Resisters

*A rumbling sound. HERMES enters, followed by KHARON, a little panicked*

KHARON

I need you both to stand aside. You're coming with me. And you, *(to ARES)* what are you doing here? Go, go go.

HERMES

Broadcasting, nightmares from the end of the road  
Children still remember how to laugh even where the sun don't shine  
The endurance level of mothers everywhere has spiked off the chart in recent months, especially in regions of severe conflicts. It is fair to conclude that they have evolved into something beyond human.  
Eyewitnesses report, wolves have been seen whimper and retrieve at the sight of zombies who prey on unarmed children.  
Soot and mud are this year's war paint on last year's beauty queen.  
Troilus and Cressida are both dead and nobody is claiming those lost tokens of love.

*Smoke clears. FOUR FEMALE FIGHTERS appear as if pushed out of the smoke. FIRST FIGHTER has a beautiful voice. SECOND FIGHTER has only one arm. THIRD FIGHTER looks like a teenager. FOURTH FIGHTER doesn't say much. THE FIRST FIGHTER sings a song. It gets a bit annoying*

SECOND FIGHTER (N)

J

*FIRST FIGHTER shuts up*

SECOND FIGHTER

*(To THIRD YPJ FIGHTER)* Are you all right?

FIRST FIGHTER (J)

Did you see how that fucker went down? That ugly piece of shit! He thought he got me. He wanted to get me! Did you see me run him through?

SECOND FIGHTER

Nobody's competing with you.

*Silence. THIRD FIGHTER cries a little.*

SECOND FIGHTER

L, concentrate. Look at me. You're all right. Everything is all right.

FOURTH FIGHTER (M)

Everything is NOT all right,

THIRD

I can't find my hat, N, did you see my hat?

FIRST

We'll find our way out of here. Then we'll go look for it together. Listen--

THIRD

But it's my mom's hat. It's got good luck charm in it. I took it -- no she gave it to me cuz I wore it better. She wanted to get rid of it -- cuz after the war we were gonna move somewhere warmer. I don't know, I wanna live somewhere near the ocean. Maybe Greece, or, I don't know, maybe -- California. San Francisco. Maybe we'll move to San Francisco when this is over. I must have -- Did you see my hat?

FIRST

Can you walk? We gotta keep moving, L.

THIRD

It's yellow, with stripes like a bumble bee --  
Mom always said it's the ugliest hat. But I still look good in it.

FIRST

Are you going to help me, Miss Congeniality? We gotta keep moving --

SECOND

Maybe we should wait.

FIRST

Wait?

THIRD

I'm never gonna see her again, am I? I miss her. It hurts to think

SECOND

Shouldn't there be someone coming to -- you know.

FOURTH

What?

SECOND

Pick us up, or something. I don't know.

This isn't like anything (I've imagined.)

You think we're going to heaven?

FIRST

I don't know. All I know is, those bastards ain't! Did you see their eyes?

Those filth! They looked scared, didn't they? You saw them. They know they're never going to heaven because they're killed by woman! Women hands, my sisters.

FOURTH

Sisters.

THIRD

Sisters.

FIRST

I wonder if my father's there.

FOURTH

I heard what happened.

My husband told me. He's from your town. (*A beat*) I'm sorry.

FIRST

I've been thinking about our conversation, if we're ever gonna have one, you know?  
I've been practicing. Cuz it's probably gonna be awkward.

L. Hey, L, look at me. You be my dad and I'll be me (*Clears her throat*)

THIRD

All right. (*Clears her throat*) J, my daughter -- what's -- er what's up?

FIRST

M weren't you an actress before? You be my dad.

FOURTH

Fine

FIRST

I heard you set yourself on fire. Why would you do that?

THIRD

Did he really do that? I heard he tried to kill himself but I didn't know -- sorry  
//sorry I'll shut up

FOURTH

J, how could you? Bringing shame to your family. It's not proper for a girl to --  
How do you want me to face our ancestors?  
How do you want me to face the gods?

FIRST

I wanted to make you proud. Did it hurt? Dad?

FOURTH

I didn't expect to see you again so soon.

FIRST

There were too many of them --

FOURTH

Were you -- you were careless again.

FIRST

But I --

FOURTH

How many did you kill today?

FIRST

23.

FOURTH

I am proud of you.

SECOND

You're not gonna see him.

FIRST

*(Offended)* My dad's a good man. He just didn't --

SECOND

I didn't mean that. He's not dead. I heard talking when they cut off my arm.

THIRD

Where are we? Where are we where are we where are we where are we?

I just want to get back out. Those bullies are still out there. I'm a big girl now! I'm 17!

I don't want to wait around here and do nothing. I can take care of myself. Those bullies -- I want to rip all of their ugly faces off, and kick their balls so hard they're gonna roll around like pigs. I miss my mom. I miss fighting side by side with her. And I miss her casserole. I miss her fingers touching my hair and braiding my hair into pretty knots. I want my hat back.

SECOND

Shhhhhh. Someone --

*KAHRON enters with LEILA's hat*

THIRD

My hat!



*KHARON gives her the hat. LEILA takes it. She checks it, overjoyed. She puts it on. KHARON leads the four women to different parts of the stage. The FIRST FIGHTER sings a song*

SECOND

My dad came to see me at the clinic  
after they cut my arm off. I said,  
daddy, I lost my right arm. He cried.  
I've never seen him cry before. I said,  
daddy, It's ok I'm a lefty.  
And last week, right? I had lunch next  
to a pile of brains. Can you believe it?

THIRD

J told me you used to be a fashion  
model. You were Miss Canada!

SECOND

I was 19 -- feels like a lifetime ago.  
My family moved to Canada when I  
was 7. My daughter's just turned 7.

*J stops singing.*

FOURTH

My daughter just turned 7. I sent her  
on a boat. Probably reached shore by  
now -- I can't protect her.  
I'm a terrible mother.

PERSEPHONE

I was going to be one of them

...

I tried to tell --

KHARON

It's not your fight.

PERSEPHONE

I've heard that one before.

...

How does he do it? To take away --

...

I'll do it. I can help.

KHARON

My mother sent *me* away.  
She had no choice  
It was a different war, a foolish one -- all of them wars are foolish.  
Some of the gods took one side; some took the other  
Good men went to war; their bodies piled up into heavens; their spirits descend into  
hades. The gods fed on their sacrifices, there was blood, thick, salty, dark blood;

blood of good men. And they pour the blood of women onto the altar so the men's ships will return to shore.

My little boat never reached shore. It just kept going, and going, until I ended up where you ended up. And Hades kept me by his side.

All the gods wanted him on their side back then.

But he said the underworld is neutral territory

#### PERSEPHONE

Hades is losing his power. The river is losing power. That's my fault. I know that's my fault somehow -- The ghosts are remembering things.

What do I do?

I forgot to say goodbye to my mother before I --

...

I'd rather be anywhere but here.

I'd rather be suffering, and bleeding, and crying my eyes out with my mother, with my sisters, and my friends, I was going to be one of them. Out there, fighting for our lives. Not here.

...

You want to go home don't you? Well, tough, you can't!

*ARES, and HADES enter. DIONYSUS awakes somewhere from a drunken stupor.*

#### DIONYSUS

I guess the party's over. What happened to the music? I'm completely pissed, is that what they say? Pish posh Dion you're fine, anyone? I've always liked the sound of this, phrase, pish posh. Look who's back, man of the house --

#### HERMES

You're coming with me. Come on.

*HERMES takes DIONYSUS out. HADES takes the FIGHTERS' memories away.*

#### ARES

You can't keep this up forever.

#### THIRD FIGHTER / L

Mom. Mom it's me. L.

4:48

I don't think --

L

But -- mom

4:48

You must have mistaken me for someone else

L

Look. This hat. You said I could have it. Remember?

4:48

I don't / know you

L

/ But

KHARON

Try to calm down .

L

/ How is this possible?

4:48

I'm really sorry

KHARON

Everyone around here is gonna remind you of someone --

L

I don't want to forget then.

KHARON

It's just a trick of your memories -- none of it is real

L

I don't want to forget this feeling then, that there's someone familiar --

KHARON

You'll start over. Tabula rasa. You'll find a new name -- and none of this would matter anymore. Trust me.

4:48

I'm really sorry

*HADES takes away LEILA's memories. KHARON takes LEILA and the rest of the fighters away.*

4:48

What if she was --

HADES

...

Can we have the room? Please.

*Everyone else exits.*

HADES

Somebody has to remember -- You have to hold on to it. Everything.

...

Do you understand? This is the way it's got to be.

It's a burden. And I'm sorry for it.

Promise me you'll record everything, always.

4:48

What do you --

HADES

Memories need to be kept alive. Every single thread of it. It's up to you now. Every last bit is as important as --

4:48

I know that // but

HADES

Kharon will show you what to do when the time comes

4:48

There's still a lot to learn. And I'm willing to learn but --

HADES  
Do I have your word

4:48  
I --

HADES  
Do I have your word

4:48  
Of course.

...  
Yes

HADES  
Good  
Now go.  
...  
GO

*4:48 exits*

*HADES starts to make a tree out of the threads in the background.*

*ARES re-enters.*

**Scene 14: Spring**

ARES

What a mess

*HADES laughs*

ARES

What. A. Mess.

...

You know Demi. Whenever her mind's made up -- she's gonna leave the land barren until she gets her girl back. You've seen what it's like out there. Those people can use / some provisions

HADES

It's her responsibility / to --

ARES

It's her right to want her daughter back, her only daughter.  
Have you figured it out yet? It's still your move.

HADES

What if she doesn't want to go back?

ARES

Of course she does. You can't even get her to eat a piece of fruit. She does not want to be with you.

HADES

You don't understand.

ARES

Smart girl. She knows the rules.

HADES

Bishop to G1

ARES

Desperate move. Knight takes Bishop. I'm gonna win, and she comes with me. Deal?

HADES

No deal. I need her here. You don't understand. Queen to H2 check.

ARES

My god. You're actually in love with her. Ugh.  
Is she your lobster?

HADES

My what?

ARES

Your lobster, you know what they say --

HADES

Yeah. She's my lobster.

ARES

That's nice. Guess what. I don't give a fuck.

HADES

There's nothing you can do. Nobody's allowed to leave without my say-so.

ARES

I can just snatch and go, take a page from your book. It's gonna cause her some, er, discomfort, crossing over your invisible walls, but what do I care. King to F3.

HADES

Pawn to e5.

ARES

Pawn takes pawn, check.

HADES

Knight to E5, Check. She's already a part of the underworld.

ARES

No she's not. Girlfriend's got excellent self-discipline. King to F4. As long as she doesn't eat anything from her --  
You don't own her.

HADES

That is never my intention. Knight to G6, check.

ARES

Fine. Back to F3.

HADES

Pawn to f4

ARES

Another pawn why thank you very much. How many pieces have you got left?

HADES

Bishop to G4, check.

ARES

King to G4. Give up now and I'll keep this in the hush hush. You're losing.

HADES

No I'm not. Knight to E5, check.

The fates haven chosen her to be my equal. Go ask them yourself.

ARES

Those old mop heads? Again, zero fuck. All right. All right. Let's make a deal for real

HADES

He wants to make a deal -- You wanna make a deal? You have no right -- Demeter can't leave the land barren. Not even for her daughter's sake. Do you really want to see the whole world turned into a war zone?

ARES

Let's see. Sure. Works for me. In fact, I'll be perfectly happy. Blood, sweat, they're like Prozac; cries of agony, yeah? Well I'm into that kind of music. Chaos, love it. Mess, love it. Raw aggression, love, love, love it. They only make me stronger.

HADES

We're talking human lives, billions of --

ARES

Human, exactly -- It's a warring breed.

HADES

There will be blood on your ledger. Death leaves a mark on those who are responsible. And I keep a record of everything

ARES

In your archive is it?

HADES

Everything in there is permanent -- I guess that's a novel concept for you



ARES

Your precious archive

As if it means anything -- Have you been to JP Morgan's library? Of course you haven't. You never go anywhere. I'll tell you about that library -- All the best relics of human accomplishments, shut off from the rest of the world in a gilded cage, never to be touched by anyone, ever. Looks impressive though, all that bulletproof glass shields, iron fences, wooden fences, and guards -- all that knowledge, as useless as mummies in a pyramid -- Reminds you of anything? You talk of keeping memories of the world alive, but those -- mummies, are not alive, they just make you a glorified hoarder.

Plus, you're understaffed, worn out. Your archive is full, your river's run dry, your streets are teaming with homeless ghosts, your eco system's epically fucked, you really look like you can use a break -- It's not me, making a deal with you.

It's you, you're gonna make a bargain with me.

It's not like Persephone is ever gonna magically succumb to your nonexistent charm. Give her up, and I'll give you, a break.

HADES

You're gonna stop the war?

ARES

Not mine to stop but -- how about I won't start new ones. For now.

HADES

...

Is it gold you wanted? Oil? Minerals? Diamonds?

ARES

I'm listening.

HADES

Everything ends up here, whether it's from an emperor's hoard or a beggar's pocket, you can have it all.

ARES

...

All right I'll take the oil

HADES

It's yours.

ARES

And the gold

HADES

Take it

ARES

What kind of idiot do you think I am? I know you don't give a crap about that stuff.

HADES

You're getting what you want.  
Isn't that enough?

ARES

If my gain doesn't cause you any real loss --  
It's just not as sweet. Get it?  
Alright. Here it is. There is something else I want  
You're gonna get rid of my files.

HADES

I can't do that

ARES

UHGGGGGG! Come on! I'm not above stealing.  
I'm really not.  
But like -- let's still be friend, k?  
Look. You do that for me, and I will talk to Demi, not making any promises, but I'll  
put in some good words for you because I'm not a complete asshole --  
who knows, maybe she'll let you visit Grey Gardens from time to time

HADES

Even if you burn the entire archive to the ground, I'll still remember everything  
you've done

ARES

If the archive is just for decoration, why do you need to keep it anyway? For  
posterity?

HADES

For insurance.

ARES

If all the lands are barren, and the whole world turns into ashes, it'll be on your  
ledger too. You ever think of that?  
Pawn to e5. (*Beat. ARES doesn't really care about losing the game.*) It's your call.

HADES

You know you can't win.

ARES

But you're gonna let me

HADES

She belongs here. She doesn't understand it yet but --

ARES

I'll take her by force if it has to come to that you know what I mean

HADES

Is that a challenge?

ARES

Is that an invitation?

...

My dear old friend, this will be my genuine pleasure.

*The two get into a fight. The fight should not seem choreographed. HADES has the upper hand when ARES takes out PERSEPHONE's dagger and kills him when unsuspected. (Because Chekhov's gun but F guns.)*

*The lights blink out. Silence. ARES is out of breath, panting*

*Silence. For a while.*

*KHARON, 4:48, and PERSEPHONE enter, in darkness. All speak at once.*

*They bump into each other. The following can be improvised.*

4:48

What the hell just happened?

Kharon and I were in the archive and the light just blew out

ARES

Persephone, where are you?

There's some good new for you.

PERSEPHONE

I can't see anything.

How do we get the lights back on?

KHARON

Everyone, shut up. Shhhhh, SHUT UP.

*Silence. KHARON lights up a lantern.*

4:48

What are you -- what have you done?

*KHARON isn't sure what to do for the first time in her long life.*

*Silence.*

ARES

We're leaving. And you. Where's my file?

KHARON

You can't --

ARES

Are you going to get me my fucking file?

4:48

How did you -- how's it even possible?

You --

*PERSEPHONE picks up the pomegranate. KHARON gives ARES what he wants.*

ARES

We're going.

PERSEPHONE

I'm hungry.

*(Beat)*

One.

*(She then puts one pomegranate seed in her mouth. She thinks about it.)*

Two.

*(Then the third, the fourth the fifth.)*

Three. Four. Five. Six.

...

Six seeds, my lucky number. Devil's number

I have been so hungry. He tricked me. Did you know that?

Take away the rough skin, inside, look, it's all --

...

He tricked me! Over and over. One, two, three, four, five, six.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six.

*She counts the seeds and puts them on the ground. Gradually lights go up.*

*She goes up to ARES and holds out her hand. ARES, as if under some unknown forces, gives her the file.*

PERSEPHONE

I guess this is why I have to -- What else is left to keep me here? If there could be no more love in me, nor duty

Not -- No more

...

I have tasted the fruit of the dead. It's sweet. Like memories. Bitter. Like memories.

It's the most precious thing. But it's not enough --

...

That's why I was -- That's why I was needed here. It's not enough.

*Silence*

## PERSEPHONE

I will return to the land of the living, to my mother, as the bride of the underworld. Because for six months every year, one for each pomegranate seed I ate, I'll be here. I'll be a fair ruler of the dead, and keep the memories alive, for thousands, millions of people, for anyone who's ever laughed, wept, ridden their first bicycle, failed their first exam, anyone who's gotten nervous before a date, or a job interview, who's spoken their vows in tears of joy at their weddings, who's held the soft, warm bodies of their newborns, who never got to kiss their loved ones goodbye. Life never ends in the underworld. I know that now. Every ghost is a brand new miracle ready to burst into life. And it's up to me to make that happen.

## ARES

It's time to go. Please

## PERSEPHONE

You don't get to tell me what to do  
For the first time in my life, I know exactly what I'm supposed to do.

...

If the fates are on my side --  
If you're with me, let spring return to the land of the dead

*Winter turns into spring. It starts gradual, a tinkering sound of water dripping into a stream, then a tumbling flow, Eventually we hear the rumbling of a river.*

## PERSEPHONE

I can punish you. Leave you wander along river Styx, like a ghost without a home. I can have you take the burden of memories, and carry the knowledge of human sufferings for eternity. And --  
But maybe the whole point of you is a reminder.

...

I forgive you. And one day.  
I'll forget about you.

*PERSEPHONE exits. Black out.*

**SCENE 15: New Beginnings**

*Spotlight on KHARON*

KHARON

The thing about gods is that they cease to exist  
If every last person on earth forgot about them  
You can kill a god when you no longer need them --  
But it's a gradual process  
Like giving up something --  
Like giving up wine  
Dionysus would bring butt loads of wine each year  
For the festivities  
I gave it up the day I became the party mom  
I could still taste it, remember it, for a while longer  
Actually it was for years, hundreds, thousands of years  
But eventually it won't be there anymore  
Then it's just not there anymore

*Lights up. The ARCHIVE*

KHARON

Something bothering you?

4:48

No. I just thought there would be more --

KHARON

Magical?

4:48

I was gonna say --  
Actually yeah, that

KHARON

No. You're just the lucky one who landed the unlucky gig.  
Digitization. Now that's the real magic.

4:48

I'm not complaining.  
I was just thinking -- What Hades said to me --

KHARON

What did he say to you?

4:48

That memories need to be kept alive

KHARON

We take care of the memory archive. It's important work.

It's a gift.

...

They'll reach the conscience of politicians, dreams of judges, deja vu before someone pulls the trigger; they no longer burden the ghosts, but they're never lost -- they'll become novels, poetry, songs. About life, mainly

...

Everything is about life.

4:48

But what if --

...

He says wars are inevitable

KHARON

Ares?

4:48

So even if they remembered

KHARON

But it's wrong to celebrate carnage

...

That's really the whole point of keeping him around.

Persephone is wise. And Ares will realize that he's wrong.

Eventually.

Maybe he'll even change.

That'd be his real punishment.

4:48

But how can he get away with --

KHARON

You ready for the next broadcast?

*A Recording, with which light shifts to dim,  
4:48 picks out a photograph, like a ripe fruit heavy on a tree branch  
PERSEPHONE's pomegranate tree soon blossoms in vibrant colors.*

HERMES (broadcasting)

Broadcasting, nightmares from the  
end of the road  
Kids are learning the differences  
between lemons and pineapples  
between apples and pomegranates  
By looking at hand grenades.

I can hear the sound of a mother's  
heart breaking  
A father's tears when no one's looking

But the kids are still singing

The silence is over.  
And the course of the wind is changing

PERSEPHONE

And though the mind is infinite, the  
heart is weak  
Memory is not enough, until flowers  
grow once more out of ashes  
I learned that much in the shadow of  
pines and the taste of pomegranate

There's still a war going on  
somewhere  
It's in our DNA  
It's going to be in our DNA until we  
evolve into something different

Remember the cause  
Remember to care

Remember to forgive  
I am a witness  
I am here  
I remember  
I will do better  
I will keep trying  
I will make the flowers grow

**THE END**